

I feel strongly that it is in the best interests of both the United States and Panama to maintain a United States military presence in Panama. United States forces in Panama help promote stable democracies throughout the region and serve as a critical component for United States counter-drug monitoring and interdiction efforts. Without question, United States forces offer the best protection for the Panama Canal. If the United States leaves, the canal will be left literally undefended.

Although the United States is engaged in a drawdown of our forces, both overseas and in the United States, there are, nevertheless, more than 135,000 United States troops remaining in Europe and almost 100,000 in the Pacific. By early 1998, fewer than 6,000 troops will remain in Panama—that is, basically 6,000 troops for the entire hemisphere. If total United States military withdrawal from Panama were to be allowed to happen, this nation will be left with no major military presence in the region.

Mr. President, I have had a number of meetings with Panamanians. They want us to stay. Polls in Panama show that about 75 percent of Panamanians want the United States to maintain military forces there beyond the year 2000. It is time to negotiate a new base rights agreement. Congress should urge the President to negotiate a continued United States military presence in Panama. The House of Representatives approved this resolution in June 1995; and it was voted out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously in December 1995. Now is the time to pursue an agreement with Panama.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 5202) was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con Res. 14), with its preamble, is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 14

Whereas the Panama Canal is a vital strategic asset to the United States, its allies, and the world;

Whereas the Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal signed on September 7, 1977, provides that Panama and the United States have the responsibility to assure that the Panama Canal will remain open and secure;

Whereas such Treaty also provides that each of the two countries shall, in accordance with their respective constitutional processes, defend the Canal against any threat to the regime of neutrality, and consequently shall have the right to act against any aggression or threat directed against the Canal or against the peaceful transit of vessels through the Canal;

Whereas the United States instrument of ratification of such Treaty includes specific language that the two countries should consider negotiating future arrangements or agreements to maintain military forces necessary to fulfill the responsibility of the two countries of maintaining the neutrality of the Canal after 1999;

Whereas the Government of Panama, in the bilateral Protocol of Exchange of instruments of ratification, expressly "agreed upon" such arrangements or agreements;

Whereas the Navy depends upon the Panama Canal for rapid transit in times of emergency, as demonstrated during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Persian Gulf conflict;

Whereas drug trafficking and money laundering has proliferated in the Western Hemisphere since the Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal was signed on September 7, 1977, and such trafficking and laundering poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region;

Whereas certain facilities now utilized by the United States Armed Forces in Panama are critical to combat the trade in illegal drugs;

Whereas the United States and Panama share common policy goals such as strengthening democracy, expanding economic trade, and combating illegal narcotics throughout Latin America;

Whereas the Government of Panama has dissolved its military forces and has maintained only a civilian police organization to defend the Panama Canal against aggression; and

Whereas certain public opinion polls in Panama suggest that many Panamanians desire a continued United States military presence in Panama: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the President should negotiate a new base rights agreement with the Government of Panama—

(A) taking into account the foregoing findings; and

(B) consulting with the Congress regarding any bilateral negotiations that take place.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this concurrent resolution to the President.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1996

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until the hour of 9:30 a.m. on Friday, September 6; further, that immediately following the prayer, the Journal of the proceedings be deemed approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired,

and the time for two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then proceed, under the order, to the consideration of the Employment Discrimination Bill; I further ask unanimous consent that at 12:30, immediately following the debate on the KENNEDY bill, there then be a period for morning business with Senators to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each, with the time from 12:30 to 1:30 under the control of Senator COVERDELL or his designee, and the time from 1:30 to 2:30 under the control of Senator DASCHLE or his designee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. FRIST. For the information of all Members, tomorrow morning, the Senate will begin 3 hours of debate on the Kennedy Employment Discrimination Bill, which was placed on the calendar this evening. There will be no rollcall votes during Friday's session.

Following the period for morning business, the Senate will adjourn over until Monday. During Monday's session, the Senate will debate the defense authorization conference report. However, no votes will occur during Monday's session.

On Tuesday, the Senate will debate the Defense of Marriage Act for 3 hours prior to the policy conference recess. At 2:15 on Tuesday, the Senate will vote on the defense authorization conference report, to be followed by a vote on the Defense of Marriage Act, and following an additional 30 minutes of debate and vote on the Kennedy bill. The Senate will then begin consideration of the Treasury-Postal Appropriations bill. All Senators should therefore be on notice that the next rollcall votes will begin at 2:15 on Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate tonight, I ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 11:17 p.m., adjourned until Friday, September 6, 1996, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate September 5, 1996:

THE JUDICIARY

DONALD M. MIDDLEBROOKS, OF FLORIDA, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA VICE JAMES W. KEHOE, RETIRED.